

[ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED]

MEMORANDUM OF PRESS BRIEFING SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1962, 12:10PM EDT

MR. MCCLOSKEY: You have before you Press Release No. 523, "U.S. Statement on United Nations' Congo Proposals."

Q. Is it true that the U.S. is responsible for the attack in Havana?

A. I can flatly deny any U.S. involvement in or knowledge of the reported shelling in Cuba -- or whatever area he (Castro) says was shelled.

Q. Does the U.S. Government know where the ships originated that made the reported killing?

A. Just let me say for BACKGROUND that there have been rumors that units of the Cuban Navy have been on maneuvers in the area.

Q. What do you mean by that? What significance are you attaching to that?

A. You might draw a conclusion of your own. It might be a provocation --

Q. The whole thing was set up by the Cubans? There are two different possibilities: one, that the Cubans set the whole thing up and that there were some dissidents -- It would have been one or the other.

Q. Have you seen the story about some outfit called the Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil who claims credit for this?

A. Again on BACKGROUND, I have seen the story and my information is that the group has previously claimed credit for acts which it had nothing to do with.

Q. The plot thickens.

A. I leave open to you the possibility the Cuban Navy themselves may have been involved.

Q. Will you rule out the possibility that some exile groups sent ships --

A. I flatly deny any U.S. knowledge of it.

Q. Is there any way to check whether vessel is manned by Cuban exiles in Florida may have been involved?

A. We have had no such information.

Q. Is it possible that the exiles might have a PT boat somewhere? Is the U.S. actively trying to prevent sorties by Cuban refugee exiles from U.S. soil, or is it winking at them and letting them go ahead?

A. I would certainly assume we would act to prevent any intervention from U.S. soil.

Q. If it were true that the Cubans did this to themselves, have you had any speculation as to why they would do it at this moment?

A. No, I have not, and I would prefer not to deal with any speculation.

Q. Is the State Department the right place to ask what steps are being taken to check into this situation?

A. I would assume so.

Q. Is there anything to report on the Berlin situation today?

A. There are no meetings here today except that Departmental people are in. The situation on the ground is very much as it was yesterday; it is calm. They have gone through to the War Memorial without incident and this is just about the size of it today.

Q. (Inaudible -- some reference to French Ambassador)

Q. There are some statements by the Peruvian Government that they will refuse to participate in certain joint military training exercises because the U.S. cancelled their military aid.

A. I am not aware of those statements.

Q. Prince Norodom Sihanouk has hinted the U.S. has rejected his plan for a new international conference on his country's neutrality.

A. The information is that Prince Sihanouk has written a letter to the President and that is under active consideration. I have not read the letter -- only the fact that it was sent several days ago.

Q. What the allegation is from Sihanouk is the idea has been rejected by a high U.S. official.

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